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An Act To Increase the Availability of Public Education Services from Child Development Services

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §7001, sub-§2-A, as enacted by PL 2005, c. 662, Pt. A, §15, is amended to read:

2-A. Free, appropriate public education. "Free, appropriate public education" means special education and related services that are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction and without charge; meet the standards of the department; include an appropriate preschool, elementary school or secondary school education in the State; and are provided in conformity with the individualized family service plan or individualized education program. Preschool children with disabilities who reach 5 years of age between ~~September~~July 1st and October 15th who are already receiving free, appropriate public education through the Child Development Services System and whose parents choose, in accordance with rules adopted by the commissioner, not to enroll those children in kindergarten until the start of the following school year must have free, appropriate public education available to them through the Child Development Services System for one additional school year.

SUMMARY

This bill expands the opportunity of preschool children with disabilities to continue to have free, appropriate public education provided through the Child Development Services System. This bill extends the window of eligibility by 2 months, allowing children who reach 5 years of age between July 1st and October 15th, instead of the current September 1st and October 15th, to continue with the Child Development Services System.